

MDS Alert

Reader Question: Understand this Acronym to Code Heart Failure Successfully

Question: A resident presented with dyspnea and peripheral edema and her clinical record notes that she has had a cough for about two weeks. The physician performed an exam and found that the dyspnea has been happening for several months and is worse on exertion. The physician ordered an ECG and chest X-ray, as well as brain natriuretic peptide (BNP) tests. He documented a diagnosis of HFrEF in the documentation, indicating heart failure. Which ICD-10 code should we report?

New Mexico Subscriber

Answer: When the physician writes HFrEF, she's referring to the acronym for heart failure with reduced ejection fraction, which is also known as systolic heart failure. When a resident has systolic heart failure, the left ventricle of her heart is not able to contract normally, so her heart can't pump with enough force to push enough blood into circulation.

If you look under ICD-10-CM category I50.2- (Systolic (congestive) heart failure), you will see two included conditions: heart failure with reduced ejection fraction (HFrEF) and systolic left ventricular heart failure. This is where your HFrEF acronym comes into play. When you are reporting systolic congestive heart failure, look to the following code choices:

- I50.20 (Unspecified systolic (congestive) heart failure)
- I50.21 (Acute systolic (congestive) heart failure)
- I50.22 (Chronic systolic (congestive) heart failure)
- I50.23 (Acute on chronic systolic (congestive) heart failure).

If the physician doesn't have any additional details in the documentation, you should ask for more information to select the right code.